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Does the USSR Really Support International Terrorism?

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Approximately one week after Ronald Reagan was inaugurated as President of the United States, Secretary of State Alexander Haig, in his first press conference on January 28, affirmed that the Soviet Union is "involved in conscious policies which foster, support and expand international terrorism." National Security adviser Richard V. Allen has also stated that there is "ample evidence" of Soviet support for terrorism.

These statements by high-level government officials represent perhaps the first time that the United States government has officially accused the Soviet Union of supporting international terrorism. The evidence for this involvement is not new, however.

As long ago as 1975, Brian Crozier, director of the Institute for the Study of Conflict in London, testified before the Senate Internal Security subcommittee that the Soviets were deeply involved in the support for and training of terrorist cadres throughout the world.

Robert Moss, John Barron, and Miles Copeland, to name but a few, are among the many prominent and respected journalists who have developed compelling evidence in the last 10 years of Soviet involvement over a lengthy period of time. More recently, Samuel T. Francis has summarized and analyzed this evidence in a monograph entitled *The Soviet Strategy of Terror*, published early this year by the Heritage Foundation. Herbert Romerstein, in a monograph just published, *Soviet Support for International Terrorism*, also presents evidence for the allegation, based on both Soviet and terrorist primary sources.

Finally, Claire Sterling, an internationally respected journalist, has recently published *The Terror Network*, which shows in massive detail the role of the KGB and other Soviet or Soviet-satellite services in the fostering and support of international terrorism.

Yet, for some reason, the thesis that the Soviets support terrorism remains controversial. Although much of the evidence was available to the mass media throughout the 1970s, there was virtually no discussion of the Soviet role in major newspapers in this period. One reason for this black-out was purely ideological.

Both liberals as well as some government officials wished to promote detente with the Soviet Union. A basic assumption of detente was that the USSR is no longer a serious "revolutionary force," that it has matured into a "great power" which

has responsible international commitments and goals and is no longer pursuing the goal of Marxist destabilization and revolution.

Of course, conservatives were all along skeptical of detente and of these claims for the Soviet Union. Long before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, we were pointing out the discrepancies between the carefully cultivated image of the Soviet Union as a "responsible power" in the West and the brutal realities of Soviet behavior.

Soviet assistance to North Vietnamese aggression in Indochina, the escalation of Soviet espionage efforts against the United States, Soviet and Cuban military involvement in southern Africa and the Horn of Africa, the Soviet military and naval buildup, reported Soviet violations of SALT I, and even the repetition of aggressive themes and slogans by Soviet leaders—all these were ignored or covered up or explained away by the proponents of detente, but were continually exposed and emphasized by conservative foreign policy spokesmen.

Because liberals and the far left exhibit a strong tendency toward "peace at any price" and were enthusiastic about "an end to the Cold War," they often refused to look at the evidence or to consider its implications. Because

high-level diplomats and policymakers in previous administrations had a vested political interest in the policy of detente, the U.S. government itself refused to deal with what was becoming a serious threat to national security.

Instead of recognizing and responding to the growing Soviet threat, we entered into a decade of withdrawal and restrictions on our own intelligence services and foreign policymaking capacities.

The Church and Pike committees investigated our intelligence services and created a "black legend" of the CIA as "a rogue elephant out of control," in the words of former Sen. Frank Church. The Levi guidelines on domestic security investigations for the FBI, restrictive executive orders for the CIA and other parts of the intelligence community, the expanded Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978, internal dissension and demoralization in the intelligence community itself, and the collapse of the internal security apparatus in the executive and legislative branches and at many local law enforcement levels as well—all these undermined our ability even to know about and analyze, let alone respond effectively to, the dangers of Soviet military escalation, covert action, espionage, terrorism and propaganda.

Of course, the proponents of detente cannot admit that the Soviets support terrorism. To admit this well-documented fact would imply that the Soviets are actively engaged in promoting violent revolutionary attacks on Western society—in other words, that the Soviet Union is not a "mature" or "responsible" power eager to become an established member of the international community.

Yet it is also true, on one level, that the Soviets do want to be accepted by the other responsible states of the West. The Kremlin desires respectability as well as the diplomatic and economic benefits that acceptance would bring.

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Thus, on one level, the Soviets must pose and present themselves as a nation-state just like any other (just as the Communist party of the United States poses as a legitimate political organization like the Republican or Democratic parties); while on another level the Soviets continue to appeal to and support violent revolutionary movements all over the world and to undermine Western stability and strength.

This second level of Soviet policy is clear not only from accumulated evidence of its results for the world, but also from the propaganda statements of the Soviet Union's Marxist-Leninist leadership. Yet, because the revolutionary work of the Soviet Union is in contradiction to its image as a responsible government, Soviet support of revolutionary movements is usually disguised through secrecy and camouflage.

So it is with Soviet support of terrorism. Less than a month after Secretary Haig's press conference, Soviet Defense Minister Dmitri Ustinov responded with a vitriolic attack in *Pravda* on February 21, denying Soviet support of terrorism. Said Ustinov:

"Here they [the United States] are in effect equating terrorism with the people's just struggle for national, economic and social liberation. But terrorism is an instrument of extremism and neo-fascism, one of the most terrible manifestations of the moral and political crisis of capitalist society and the embodiment of lawlessness, while the national liberation struggle is progressive in nature and its legitimacy has long been recognized by the international community and confirmed by U.N. decisions....

"The aim of imperialism's latest act of political sabotage is clear: to discredit the national liberation movements, with which the Soviet Union and the other Socialist countries are in solidarity."

Now there are several significant features of this seemingly strong disavowal of terrorism by a top Soviet leader. First, Ustinov defines terrorism as "an instrument of extremism and neo-fascism" and relates it to the decadence of capitalism—that is, he manages to limit terrorism to the

political right and to the West. Thus, under this concept of terrorism, the Soviets have no difficulty in denying that they support it. Obviously, the Marxists of the Kremlin are opposed to the political right and the "decadence" of capitalism.

Second, Ustinov distinguishes between terrorism (which is bad) and "national liberation movements" (good). The Soviets support the latter and regard them as "progressive," while the imperialists of the decadent West oppose them and label them as terrorist.

Thus, it is not entirely accurate to say that the Soviets are simply lying when they condemn terrorism in statements such as Ustinov's. Rather, the Soviets have managed to design their own "Newspeak," or political language, by which they can develop definitions and manipulate language and values to support terrorism themselves covertly, deny that they do so, and then cast the blame for terrorism on the West.

This Soviet manipulation of language is, of course, a distortion of the truth. The term "terrorism," as it is used in the West, refers to violence directed against civilian or non-combatant persons or institutions for political purposes, whether it comes from the right or the left.

One of the clearest examples of Soviet support for terrorism is the so-called "national liberation movement," the African National Congress (ANC), an appendage of the South African Communist party, the official publications of which are printed in East Germany. The leader of the ANC is Oliver Tambo, and its campaign of terrorism and sabotage against South Africa is directed by a native-born Lithuanian, Joseph Slovo, a member of the Communist party who is headquartered in the Marxist ally of the Soviet Union, Mozambique.

In January 1980, three operatives of the ANC attempted to raid a bank in Pretoria. They took 25 persons hostage and murdered a 19-year-old teller and another hostage before they themselves were killed by the police. The terrorists

used AK-47 rifles in their attack. In June 1980 the ANC detonated bombs at the coal-oil conversion plants at Sasolburg in South Africa.

These and similar incidents are clear examples of terrorism—not guerrilla warfare (in which regular military units are engaged in combat with irregular, non-military forces).

Yet a recent article in an official organ of the South African Communist party, *The African Communist*, denied that the ANC campaign of violence is terrorism; rather, the terrorist attack is described as "effective and sustained guerrilla operations including a nationwide sabotage campaign reminiscent of the early '60s," and the terrorism of the ANC is described as a "liberation struggle."

The Soviets and their terrorist surrogates therefore admit that they support terrorism; they simply do not call it by that name, and they reserve that term for their enemies.

The Soviets describe many of the terrorist movements that they support as "national liberation movements" and regard them as "progressive." There are many examples of this deliberately confusing practice from terrorist organizations themselves, as well as from the Soviets.

One of the most dangerous terrorist groups now operating in the United States is the Puerto Rican FALN—the abbreviation for the Spanish name, "Armed Forces of National Liberation." It was FALN that claimed credit for the bombing of Fraunces Tavern in New York City in January 1975, when several individuals were killed. Another example is the infamous "Tupamaros" of Uruguay, the official name of which is the "Movement for National Liberation."

Just as members of organized crime syndicates like to call their activities—vice, narcotics, extortion, fraud—by the name of "business," so the perpetrators and supporters of terrorism like to call their activities "liberation." There is no reason to take either euphemism seriously.

Unfortunately, some who have been critical of the Administration's counter-terrorist policy have failed to understand this trick of language.

Arthur Schlesinger Jr., writing in the *Wall Street Journal* on Feb. 23, 1981, states that "Abundant evidence exists

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that the Soviet Union trains people for 'wars of national liberation'—i.e., insurrections and guerrilla wars—but that is not what the Secretary [Haig] was talking about."

Mr. Schlesinger has apparently fallen victim to Soviet disinformation; he takes the Soviet distinction between terrorism and "national liberation" seriously, although in the case of self-proclaimed "national liberators" such as the ANC, FALN, the Tupamaros, and dozens of other terrorist groups, including the PLO and its components, there is no objective difference in their activities and the targets of their violence.

The inability to cut through the Newspeak and propaganda line of the Soviets and the terrorists has apparently become imbedded in the CIA itself.

On March 29, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* both reported that a draft National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) of the CIA cast doubt on the Soviets' support of terrorism. One source was quoted as saying that the NIE (which was classified but leaked to the press some time before it was completed) "strongly disagrees with Reagan and Haig's contention that the Soviets are behind international terrorism." Many of my colleagues and I, as well as many professional experts who are familiar with the evidence for the Soviet-terrorist connection, were initially dismayed by these reports. If abundant evidence for the connection exists and is available in the public record, why could the CIA not rely on this as well as on other, classified information?

William Colby himself, the former director of the CIA, recently confirmed that the Soviets are deeply involved in terrorism in several ways in his testimony before the Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism on April 24. If Mr. Colby is persuaded of Soviet complicity in terrorism, why is the current CIA skeptical?

I tend to agree with what some of the critics of the leaked National Intelligence Estimate have called "definitional" problems in the CIA's approach to terrorism and with what one official of the Defense Intelligence Agency reportedly called the "weasel-worded" conclusion of the NIE.

In the first place, the confused and largely erroneous distinction between national liberation movements and terrorism appears to befuddle the minds of many journalists, academic experts and even some CIA analysts. As I have tried to show, there is no necessary difference between the two, and many of the so-called "national liberation movements" that the Soviets support engage in and rely on terrorism.

A second reason for the alleged CIA skepticism may lie in the exaggerated claim that the Soviets are "behind" terrorism. But one of the several authorities who have written about the Soviet link to international terrorism claims that the USSR formally directs terrorists. There is no reason to believe, on available evidence, that international terrorism is centrally controlled by the Soviets or by anyone else.

What the Soviets do—and what Communists have historically done—is support terrorism, feed on and manipulate and pervert for their own ulterior ends the grievances and complaints that motivate political violence and insurgency.

It is true that world terrorism would not be anywhere near as dangerous or as effective without the training, supply and propaganda support given it by the Soviets, but it is doubtful that the Kremlin or the KGB actually gives the orders for terrorist groups or operations. The source cited by the *New York Times* therefore set up a strawman argument when he denied that the Soviets are "behind" (that is, control, cause, or direct) terrorism.

Finally there is a problem of the meaning of "evidence." Under the Carter Administration, say experienced and recently retired CIA officers, the standard of evidence that CIA insisted on was not the *preponderance of circumstance*, but rather *proof beyond a reasonable doubt*. While this standard is proper and necessary in a formal criminal prosecution, it is inappropriate and unnecessary for investigative and intelligence purposes.

Terrorist activities and the support given them by the Soviets are often illegal and clandestine. Hence, it is difficult to collect evidence for the relationship, and even circumstantial

evidence is hard to come by. Some of it may not be legally admissible in an American court of law and some may not be absolutely definitive. Yet the bulk of the evidence for Soviet support of terrorism is compelling to any reasonable person.

Moreover, much of the evidence, collected over the past decade, is cumulative; that is, over a period of time, it reveals a pattern of activities, each part of which may not be compelling but the over-all implications of which are clear.

When the evidence from one part of the world is added to evidence from other parts and other periods of time and considered in the light of publicly available Soviet and terrorist statements and propaganda, these implications lead inescapably to the conclusion that the Soviets are and for some time have been deeply involved in the support of international terrorism.

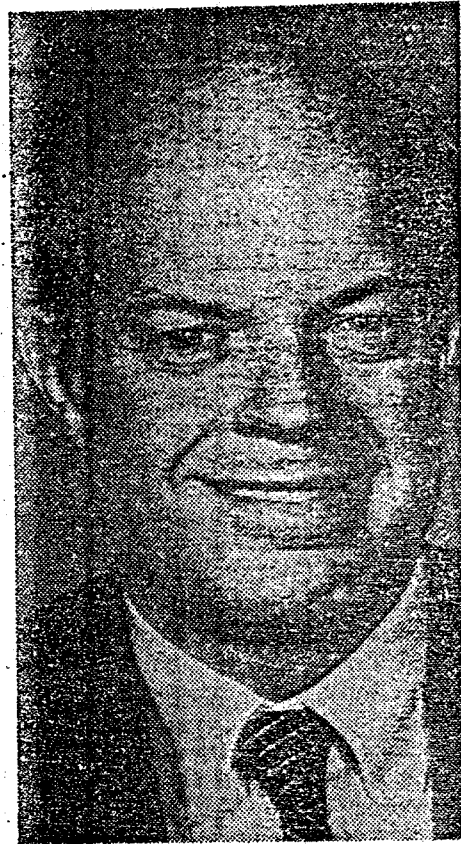
An intelligence service is one of the most important institutions modern governments have for the protection of their national security, and it is especially important for the United States today. We do not possess the military and economic strength that we once had, and during the time it will take to rebuild our military and economic strength, a strong intelligence service capable of collecting information about our adversaries and analyzing, predicting and neutralizing future crises and hostile political forces is indispensable in an era of increasing challenges.

The CIA for over 30 years has done valuable work for the United States, but we must recognize that it has sometimes failed us in the accuracy of its analyses and estimates. As The Heritage Foundation's *Mandate for Leadership* points out, CIA estimates have been wrong on such questions as the stability of Iran under the shah, the Egyptian attack on Israel in 1973, the Arab oil embargo, the Italian "opening to the left" in the 1960s, and, most seriously of all, the size, scope and purpose of the Soviet buildup of strategic forces for nearly 15 years.

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Whatever the reasons, then, for the CIA's inability to substantiate Secretary Haig's allegations of Soviet support for terrorism, I find it difficult to take the estimate seriously in the light of well-documented evidence to the contrary and in view of previous CIA errors. What I do take seriously—and what I urge President Reagan and CIA Director William Casey to ponder long and deeply—are the past failures of the CIA and the present laws and executive orders that so often prevent American intelligence from fulfilling its mission. ■

Sen. East is a member of the Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism.



Sen. East laments the fact that "The inability to cut through the New-Speak and propaganda line of the Soviets and the terrorists has apparently become imbedded in the CIA itself."